

Dimensions

A publication for the Employees and Friends of VASDHS

October - November 2005

VA Celebrates 75 Years & VASDHS Celebrates 33 Years of Serving Veterans

by Cindy Butler

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The Department of Veterans Affairs is commemorating its 75th anniversary! This nationwide celebration marks the department's progress in establishing an exceptional healthcare system, research program, and positive growth. With its commitment to excellence, it is no wonder why its 75th will be a yearlong celebration.

Some highlights of the department's progress include the establishment of the national Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on March 15, 1989, succeeding the Veterans Administration. Headed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the VA Department is responsible for providing federal benefits to veterans and their families. The VA is now the second largest of the 15 Cabinet departments and operates nationwide programs for health care, financial assistance, and burial benefits. From 54 hospitals in 1930, it now includes 157 medical centers, 862 ambulatory care and community-based outpatient clinics, 134 nursing homes, 42 residential rehabilitation treatment pro-

grams, 207 Veteran Centers, and 88 comprehensive home-care programs.

The VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) is celebrating 33 years of serving our veteran community. Individually, we celebrate our position as one of the leading veterans medical centers nationwide. Our cutting-edge technology, research, medical expertise, and caring patient service has marked us as a standard for quality health care.

San Diego's first VA health care started with an outpatient clinic located in downtown San Diego. The medical center groundbreaking was May 30, 1969, and the 800 bed modern San Diego VA medical center opened in March 1972. Many milestones followed:

VASDHS has grown in size and stature, and is now serving over 50,000 veterans.

VASDHS Statistics

of veterans in San Diego & Imperial Counties (2000 Census projected for 2005) **260,206**

San Diego veterans by period of service:
(from 2000 Census)

<u>Era</u>	<u>%</u>
Gulf War I (1990—2000)	20%
Grenada, Balkans (1975—1990)	13%
Vietnam (1965—1975)	32%
(Feb 1995—Jul 1964)	7%
Korea	11%
World War II	16%
Other	<u>1%</u>
	100%

of VASDHS employees who are veterans **854**

of VASDHS employees who are reservists **233**

of VASDHS volunteers who are veterans **510**

of OIF/OEF VASDHS has served since the start of the war (as of Sep 6, 2005) **2,052**



VA San Diego Healthcare System has grown in size and stature, and is now serving over 50,000 veterans.

We also help returning combat veterans by having a full-time case manager who assists them in accessing VA health benefits. The medical center has 238 beds and over 2,600 staff who provide comprehensive medical, surgical, rehabilitation, spinal cord injury, and extended care. State-of-the-art computer technology provides a higher standard of quality care and patient safety. More than 1,000 volunteers dedicate their time and energy into giving back to veterans and the community.

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VA Celebrates 75 Years & VASDHS Celebrates 33 Years of Serving Veterans

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We hope you will share in this celebration as the Department of Veterans Affairs celebrates its 75th year of serving veterans and the VA San Diego Healthcare System commemorates our 33 years of serving San Diego veterans.

18th Annual Veterans Day Parade

Help us represent VASDHS in the 18th Annual Veterans Day Parade on **Friday, November 11, 2005**. The parade starts at 10:00 am at Park Blvd in Balboa Park. Come join Mr. Rossio, our Director as we support others in our community to honor America's heroes. Additional information will be provided via the Weekly E-News for staging area and meeting time.

VA Voluntary Service Program



by Lorelei Winn

During this past year, our VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) program, its volunteers and local community organizations provided support in many ways, which exceed the normal hours of service, and support. Over 40 service and fraternal organizations make up the VAVS committee. VA San Diego is proud of our relationship with the veteran community. Our medical center and five outpatient clinics have all benefited from this support.

The Annual VAVS Bazaar raised over \$11,500 – a good example of our organizations working together to raise funds for patient programs. Some of the programs that benefit from these funds are: televisions located in patient rooms and clinical waiting rooms, female bicycle for the police service, funding for the Golden Age Games, ADTP patient mug program,

camera and printer for foot clinic and many other much needed items throughout the medical center. In December, the Holiday Ward Decorations Program and the Annual Care & Share Holiday Baskets were a huge success. The VAVS Committee donated \$1,000 to purchase certificates for turkeys and hams for food baskets that were distributed to over 228 indigent families to help them celebrate the season. Over 627 people including 188 children benefited from this program.

VAVS builds on America's natural spirit to serve our neighbors and our Nation. We are committed to VA's first mission of providing quality and compassionate health care to America's veterans with the support of a dynamic and diverse volunteer work force.

Lycopene... Nutrient of the Month

by Erin Hudson

This antioxidant is a pigment found in fruits and vegetables that helps give them their **red** color. By destroying free radicals in your body, it helps...

- decrease the risk of heart disease
- reduce the risk of prostate cancer
- decrease the risk of digestive tract cancers

To get the recommended amount of lycopene in your diet each day, reach for the following foods:

- spaghetti sauce (1/2 cup)
- tomato juice (watch the sodium - 1 cup)
- watermelon (1 slice)
- raw tomato (1 medium)
- tomato soup (watch the sodium - 1 cup prepared)



For more information on lycopene, visit www.eatright.org or www.lycopene.org

Adapted from Lycopene handout, VASDHS 2/05

Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP)

by Jean Sobczak

Results are in from the most recent Inpatient and Outpatient Surveys of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP). Our patients continue to rate their Overall Quality of Care as exceptional! VASDHS' inpatients rate satisfaction at 5% above the national average. Our outpatient satisfaction scores are 6% above the national average. Congratulations! More details available at the following web link: <http://vaww.san-diego.med.va.gov/Director/PSS/index.htm>



Affirming the Commitment

by Jean Sobczak



America's veterans have made tremendous sacrifices to protect our freedoms, and VA is committed to providing these veterans with world-class service. Our responsibilities to them go far beyond humane and compassionate care. We must try to improve the quality of veterans' lives.

Affirming the Commitment recognizes your human spirit and empowers you to seek greater meaning to your workday by opening hearts to veterans.

Through the Affirming the Commitment Web site (<http://vaww.va.gov/atc>), you will be able to access a series of inspirational materials such as a book, brochure, resources, veteran and employee stories and more.

Why not check it out today?

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

- Albert Einstein

FROM THE STAFF

Dimensions is a bimonthly publication of the VA San Diego Healthcare System. Your suggestions, contributions, and photos are most welcome. Submissions for the Dec-Jan 2005 issue are due October 27, 2005

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Vacant

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Veterans Serving Veterans



In honor of Veterans Day, VA San Diego is proud to once again recognize those veterans who are serving veterans within the VA San Diego Healthcare System. Please join us in recognizing this group of veterans in the Spinal Cord Injury Atrium from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm on Wednesday, November 9, 2005.

New Chair-Elect of AACN Certification Corporation Board of Directors



Rebecca E. Long, RN, MS, CCRN,

Rebecca E. Long is the new chair-elect of American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) Certification Corporation Board of Directors.

Long is a member of AACN since 1984, she served on the AACN Board of Directors from 2000 to 2003 and on the AACN Certification Corporation Board of Directors in 2003. Long was the AACN legislative fellow in 1993. She is a member and past president of the San Diego Area Chapter of AACN.

Long is also a member of the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses, National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, Nurses of Veterans Affairs and Sigma Theta Tau.

Flu Vaccine

Influenza vaccination is the primary method for preventing influenza and its severe complications. Influenza viruses change from year to year, so influenza vaccines must be updated annually to include the viruses that will most likely circulate in the upcoming season. We expect to begin vaccinating patients and staff soon. Specific information will be announced. Please plan to get your flu shot. It's the best thing you can do to protect yourself, your family and our patients.

EVENTS & AWARDS

Senator Feinstein was here!



Richard Rodriguez and Francisco Pinedo of Prosthetics with Senator Feinstein

Senator Diane Feinstein toured VASDHS and held a media availability session on August 25, 2005. VASDHS executive leaders as well as veteran representatives attended the event. Senator Feinstein visited the Enrollment Office, Prosthetics Service and Spinal Cord Injury Unit. Various local media were present including CBS, ABC, NBC, KUSI TV, Fox TV, KBNT 17 Univision, KPBS, KOGO radio, etc.

PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY 2005

The Partnership for Safety 2005 Goal Sharing Team organized a unique educational event for VA San Diego Healthcare System employees and patients on August 2, 2005. The goal of the Communication Fair was to promote the concept of "Partnership for Safety" to improve skills for healthy communication between staff and patients, increase awareness of resources available to address problems, and to reduce the risk of violence if conflict does occur. Approximately 200 employees and patients attended the event.



"Partnership for Safety" VASDHS Goal Sharing Team Project

EXCELLENCE PROGRAM AWARDS THIRD QUARTER FY 2005

Karis Award

Jessica Brian
Russell Cain
Ted Canterbury
Joel Gilliam
Scott T. Johns
Catherine Vrabel

Excellence in Service

Wanda Baker
Alvin Joseph
Craig A. Keyes
Nardo Lansang
Leo Mapalo
Karen Mooney
Kathleen O'Classen
Joyce Roberts
Jean.B. Rigaud
Connie Siplyak
Robert L. West

Excellence in Teamwork

Dental Service Team

Terry O'Toole
Timothy Wilson
Kenneth Fedor

Interventional Radiology Nursing Team

Elizabeth Greer
Dixon Johnson
Linda Wilkens

Keep it Simple & Straight

Cecilia Calangian
Maggie Guth
Nancy Howerton
Robin Larson
Wayne Marshall

Service Pin Recipients

25 Years
Armand Bernheim
Karen T. Britton

Edith A. Bryant
Remedios N. Esguerra
Rebecca Estacio
Lea C. Gomez
Robert L. Gregory, Jr.
Tracey A. Grosser
Loan T. Hallock
Mindy S. Kane
Kathryn Kerwick
Roger B. Mirador
Manuel S. Nacpil
Romeo C. Pacho
Georgene K. Parr
Michael A. Perrone
Clarence Sellers
Charlene Tyson
Joel S. Yalung
Marites S. Zullo

30 Years

Patricia D. Barrett
Romeo L. Batin
Jon A. Belsha
Bernardo O. Capacete

Noreen L. Constantino

Jose P. Flores
Ronald A. Gaut
Thomas R. Gordon
Catherine I. Harris
Doris. M. King
Shelley L. Leahy
Jaime M. Lopez
Nancy A. Matloff
Randall E. Ritter
Jay M. Robles
Lennart H. Sammuli
Marc A. Schuckit
Marsha L. Towers
Terry L. Weiss
Ignacio A. Zamudio

35 Years

Oscar Agra
Rizalito M. Belardo
Lewana R. Betts
Roland C. Blantz
Richard A. Godfrey
Robert S. Mac Gregor

3rd Annual Customer Service Expo



3rd Annual Customer Service Expo

VASDHS held their 3rd Annual Customer Service Expo on July 26, 2005 in the Multipurpose Room and in Mission Valley on August 30, 2005. The theme of this year's Expo was TRECC (Trust, Respect, Excellence, Compassion, Commitment). A train model was created that displayed all the dimensions of care from the Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP) along with the latest score.

Veteran Outreach



Michael Kilmer, Sheryl Becker, Lou Paratore, & Wilbert Hadnot

VASDHS hosted a booth at the Annual Pride Festival event in Balboa Park. This is a two day community event held on July 30-31, 2005. An estimated 50,000 people attended the festival. The booth handed out approximately 25-30 new enrollment packets, answered a variety of benefit questions, and promoted health-care services.

